

DATE: March 30, 2012

BDCP ISSUE PAPER

TOPIC: Biological Goals and Objectives (BGOs)

ISSUE DESCRIPTION: There has been ongoing disagreement over having specific population level metrics for assessing progress in meeting BDCP goals and objectives. There is general acceptance that the plan goal is to increase the abundance and distribution, but there was no agreement on specific numeric targets due to concern over how they would be used, eg. they would become specific permit requirements as opposed as indicators of performance in achieving BGOs. As part of a recent effort to overcome this disagreement, a BGOs guidance memo was developed. As part of this memo, the BDCP will establish BGOs for covered species that are intended to be achieved through Plan implementation where BGOs may or may not be ESA permit conditions. Achievement of certain biological objectives may be permit conditions in the context of the adaptive management program for certain conservation measures. Those objectives that may be permit conditions are those that are both achievable by the permittee and are essential for agency findings.

AGREEMENT: There is general agreement on BGOs as reflected in the BGOs guidance memo provided to ICF for plan development. BDCP biological goals articulate the broad, intended outcomes of the Habitat Conservation Plan (“HCP”)/Natural Communities Conservation Plan (“NCCP”) (together, “Plan”). Biological objectives are outcomes that are expected to be achieved by the Plan. Conservation measures will be designed to achieve the biological objectives and will directly or indirectly contribute to achieving one or more biological goals.

DISAGREEMENT: Disagreements about BGOs remain for the following species: Delta smelt, longfin smelt, and delta survival for salmonids (which ones specifically?). These disagreements include the numerical objectives themselves, whether they are incorporated as BGOs or actual conservation measures, as part of the adaptive management plan, and whether attaining a BGO is a condition of permit compliance.

NEXT STEPS:

1. ICF to provide revised BGOs based on fish agency comments.
2. Fish Agencies to frame specific concerns for resolution at the April Principals workshop.
 - a. Should framing of the BGO issues for Delta smelt, longfin smelt, and salmonids for resolution be done in the context of water operations (initial and adaptive range) and facility phasing discussions?
 - b. How is the risk of scientific uncertainty around action and response, given the ecological complexity of the Delta, allocated across parties – those seeking regulatory coverage and associated assurances and the general public?
 - c. How can the science program, adaptive management program (for all

conservation measures - water, habitat, and other stressor measure) be designed to allocate and manage risk fairly?

3. Confirm acceptability of all other BGO for plan (with the exception of minor refinements).

WORKING DRAFT